

## INTERNET SAFETY: GUIDE FOR PARENTS

### Scriptural Principle: Keep Watch

Matthew 24:42-43

“Therefore keep watch, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come. But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.”

### SOCIAL NETWORKING

*WE LIVE IN A  
DANGEROUS WORLD:*

Don't underestimate the power of the online world. Don't be complacent about a world that is loaded with “safety-seeming” precautions and procedures: child safety seats, bicycle safety helmets, smoking ban in restaurants, etc...

- MY SPACE  
([www.MySpace.com](http://www.MySpace.com))
- FACEBOOK  
([www.Facebook.com](http://www.Facebook.com))

Children create a personal page representing their personalities and interests; others browse and are approved as “friends,” thereby establishing a link between the two pages.

Dangers: Online predators can obtain your child's information; social threat.

Strategy: Set the pages to a private mode thereby requiring acceptance by the profile owner to be viewed.

## VIRTUAL WORLDS

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- **ROLE PLAYING GAMES:** Create a community/design a character for oneself (avatar)

Children create a character who can be anything they want him/her to be.

Dangers: Reality threat; true blindness to those with whom you play; chance to see nudity, alcohol use, etc. (Dangerous site for young children = [www.weeworld.com](http://www.weeworld.com))

Strategy: Do not allow your child to use a computer with a webcam. Limit videos and pictures of your child being shared without the use of a webcam.

## PREDATORS

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- **ENEMIES WHO APPEAR TO OFFER FRIENDSHIP AND TAKE ON THE CHILD'S POINT OF VIEW**

Children can be vulnerable when they are: technologically savvy, online for hours, emotionally hurt, innocent/trusting, very willing to post personal information, in need of a friend.

Dangers: Safety threat; predator may easily send pornographic pictures and threaten a child if parents are told.

Strategy: Immediately intervene if your child is receiving mail from someone you do not know or is switching the screen quickly when you enter the room.

## **CYBER BULLYING**

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- **THREATENING/VERBALLY  
ATTACKING**

**Dangers:** Emotional/spiritual threat; using a webpage to make fun of someone or to display their personal/private information and promote embarrassment.

**Strategy:** Bullying is very hard to prove, vigilant parents will save and review their child's text messages and emails and networking sites.

## **OTHER EXTREMES**

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- **SEXTING** (sending nude or provocative pictures to others)
- **FILE SHARING** (downloading music or movies illegally without paying)
- **ONLINE GAMES** (role playing – addictive and time wasting)
- **VIDEO GAME SYSTEMS** (XBOX 360 and Wii; capability to connect to the internet/wireless)

**Please visit the following website for  
more information:**

**[www.internetsafetyday.com](http://www.internetsafetyday.com)**

**We serve a risen Saviour Who is more than  
able to and is willing to redeem the  
brokenness in our lives, including misuse of  
the internet.**

*II Timothy 3:1-4*

*"But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days. People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, without love, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good, treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God."*

### **Summary of Strategies**

- **Pray for a hedge of protection around your child.**
- **Put the computer in a location in your home where you can keep an eye on what is viewed.**
- **Don't allow your child to use a webcam.**
- **Set Facebook or MySpace pages to a private mode.**
- **Talk to your child! Express your love and concern for them and keep the lines of communication open.**